

March 30, 1976

Dr. Martin Kaplan  
World Health Organization  
1211 Geneva 27, Switzerland

Dear Martin,

To yours of the 18th. Yes, I did get a most interesting reply from Bulanov about blood group factors and cholera.

Thank you for reassuring me about the non-specificity of Mahler's silence. But what a way to run an organization!

I certainly share your concerns about the paperwork problem. I do think that it has a structural basis and that it is going to take some fairly specific management proposals, not a generalized statement of good intentions to accomplish a useful result. There certainly is a needless multiplication of layers of responsibility and obviously the more places that pieces have to be transmitted, digested and reassembled the more the work multiplies. But I thought you had some pretty smart people on the administrative side. Can't you get some of them to tackle this very problem?

I am really puzzled about how to answer your request about assessments of technical research programs. I think I would just leave it on the record that it is not possible to record a fair assessment without the kind of summary documentation that your unit has been collecting. I do have a set of random impressions but it would be grossly unfair to the individuals involved and be a possible source of distortion for the work of the organization for me to impute any reliability to them without a more systematic framework. I hope there is going to be something fairly concrete that can be prepared for the ACMR session reviews in this connection or once again it will be very largely a waste of time. And I mean real nuts and bolts, the kind of information on projects, summaries, reports of work actually accomplished, publications, budgets, personnel and so on that can put some real meat into a survey. I realize that takes still more paperwork but I think it is likely to be far more important than many of the other pieces of paper that are exchanged within the organization one to another and which simply create demands for even more.

I have been trying to get you the last word on the defense appropriation act which contained language with respect to the momentary cessation of United States Army funding for binary weapons production. This has a very complicated history and I want to be sure that you do get it exactly right. It was not until at least the middle of January

that the act was in fact signed, and it is conceivable that all we are going to see in a formal way is the lack of a line item although there had been a great deal of commentary on the significance of rescinding that appropriation during the legislative process. I am also told that the present year's proposed DOD budget as submitted by the Executive again likewise makes no provision for such funding presumably in the expectation that this may help illicit some more constructive results on CW control at the CCD. I hope that Joe Martin will have been trying to get in touch with you or vice versa during the CCD sessions. It is good to hear from you and we send our best to both of you.

Sincerely yours,

Joshua Lederberg  
Professor of Genetics

JL/rr